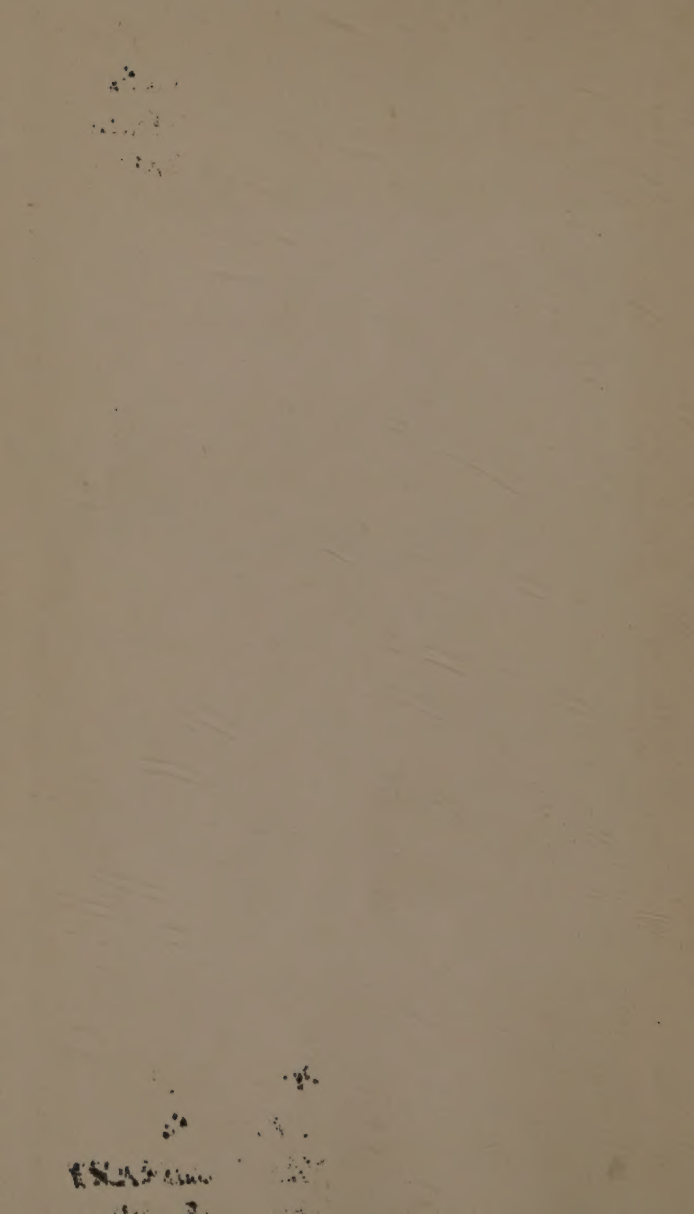




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DOCTRINE

ADULT PROBATIONER'S SECOND BOOK

BY

REV. J. E. GILBERT, D.D.

Secretary of Spiritual Culture Society

"Teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present
every man perfect in Christ Jesus."—Col. i, 28

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THE FULL COURSE

First Term: Religious Experience

Second Term: Biblical Doctrine

Third Term: American Methodism

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Introduction.

THIS is the second in a series of three manuals designed primarily for classes of adult probationers. The books might also be used with profit by members in full connection. Another series provides for juvenile probationers.

In recent years there has been a diminishing regard for doctrine. There are some among us who hold that it does not matter what one believes, that the character alone is to be considered. These forget that both character and conduct are regulated by belief. No one rises above his doctrinal attainment, while many sink below it. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." His thoughts awaken desires, and his desires produce actions. An orderly arrangement of thought is a doctrine.

INTRODUCTION.

The themes presented here are from a biblical standpoint. It is believed that the views herein expressed will be indorsed by the great body of evangelical Christians of all denominations. There has been an endeavor at every step to avoid those peculiar opinions that have divided the churches. We do well in our time to lay much emphasis upon that body of common truth which has been dear to the historic and general church, and to hold this against errors and vagaries. The distinctive doctrines of Methodism will be presented in next term's book.

The present discussions are mere outlines, the most that could be expected for the persons who are expected to use them. If well fixed in the mind, however, they may form a valuable skeleton to be clothed by subsequent and more extended study. Indeed, it is to be hoped that on entering the church of their choice probationers will con-

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tinue their doctrinal studies, using as a basis what is herein set forth. The works mentioned in the appendix will be helpful to those who desire to pursue certain subjects more broadly and thoroughly.

Special attention is called to the Appendix, in which are questions for review, topics for meditation, and a course of reading.

Did not our Saviour say, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"? It is fondly hoped that these studies will lead to knowledge and the freedom that comes by knowledge. Sound doctrine promotes good living.

J. E. GILBERT.

Washington, D. C., March 1, 1904.

Biblical Doctrine.

FIRST LESSON.

Doctrine of God.

HIS EXISTENCE.

1. THE Scriptures do not attempt to prove the existence of God. From first to last they assume that all men believe there is a supreme Being on whom they are dependent and to whom they are responsible (Gen. i, 1; Rev. xxii, 19).
2. The Scriptures affirm that what is thus assumed is fully sustained by the facts of human consciousness (Rom. i, 19) and the phenomena of the material universe (Psa. xix, 1-3), so that the inner and the outer

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world perpetually declare to men that there is a God.

3. The correctness of the assumptions and the force of the attestations appear in the fact that every nation has some belief in the existence of a Deity. The heathen bear testimony to their faith by their defective notions of God and their attempts to gain his favor.

4. The Bible accounts for atheism as resulting from a depraved state of the human soul (Psa. xiv, 1). The Scripture fool is one who has been blinded and perverted by sin, who does not desire to know anything of God (Rom. i, 28). Atheism is the result of moral derangement.

HIS DISCLOSURE.

5. In his innocence man knew God and communed with him, as friend with friend (Gen. ii, 16), a further proof that the position in the fourth paragraph is correct. The

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powers of the soul before sin had weakened them were able to go out after God and to find him.

6. By the fall man lost communion with God and obtained many false views of him (Rom. i, 23-25), and yet he did not lose all capacity for such knowledge, but by his unaided powers he could not arrive at the truth concerning the Deity. A special revelation was therefore necessary, besides that contained in nature (Rom. i, 20).

7. This supernatural disclosure of God to man has been by two modes: first, by a series of books written by holy men who were inspired to write (2 Tim. iii, 16), and, second, by the incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ, his Son (Heb. i, 2). The chief design in these revelations was to make known the excellence of the character of God and the wisdom of his purpose and plan.

8. It is therefore the privilege of every

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man by means of the Scripture and of the personal Christ to come into conscious acquaintance with God, the highest attainment in knowledge (John xvii, 3).

HIS NATURE.

9. God is a Spirit (John iv, 24), infinite, eternal, unchangeable, the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of all things; the Father, Lawgiver, and Judge of men.

10. The scriptural doctrine of God is opposed to Materialism, which denies the existence of any spiritual being of any kind, and affirms that matter only is real; to Idealism, which denies the reality of all objective existence; to Pantheism, which makes God and nature one; to Hylozoism, which assumes that God like man is a composite being, the world being to him what the body is to us.

11. In the Godhead there are three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—

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all existing in eternal unity, neither being before or after the other, greater or less than the other (1 John v, 7). These three constitute what is termed the Trinity (the Three-One).

HIS ATTRIBUTES.

12. The essential attributes of the Godhead are:

Unity. There is but one God (John x, 30).

Spirituality. His being is an uncompounded, immaterial substance, in every respect inconceivable.

Eternity. "God has lived always, and he will live forever" (Psa. cii, 27).

Omnipotence. God can do whatsoever he will (Psa. cxxxv, 6; Dan. iv, 35).

Omnipresence. God fills the heaven and the earth, and is equally present in every place at all times (Psa. cxxxix, 7, 8).

Omniscience. God knows all things, even

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the secret thoughts of our hearts (Psa. cxxxix, 2, 3).

Benevolence. God is love, an infinite fountain of benevolence to all his creatures (1 John iv, 8).

Justice. God will award to every man according to his deserts (Exod. xx, 5, 6).

Holiness. God hates all iniquity (Deut. xxv, 16).

Immutability. God is unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day, forever (Mal. iii, 6).

HIS WORKS.

13. The Bible represents God as exerting his power in three ordinary ways:

He creates. He is the first cause of everything (Gen. i, 1). Whatever is in heaven or in earth came into being by his will (Rom. xi, 36).

He preserves. Unsupported by him all things would cease to be (Heb. i, 3).

He governs. He puts forth his power to

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control what he has made, and he does this for some wise purpose which his creatures cannot fully comprehend.

14. The Bible represents God as exerting his power at times in an extraordinary way. He is free to work without, above, or against the ordinary processes which have been ordained by him. His acts in this respect are called miracles (Acts xv, 12).

15. The acts of God are prompted by love and directed by wisdom (Psa. civ, 24). They are the methods by which he executes his purpose, which is hidden in the depths of his own mind but will be displayed in the ages to come.

Meditation. "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens" (Psa. viii, 1).

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SECOND LESSON.

Doctrine of Man.

HIS ORIGIN.

1. MAN is a creature (Gen. i, 26-28), the last of the beings God formed on the earth.

2. Some philosophers have attempted to show that man is the product of an evolutionary process in nature, the noblest specimen of the animal kingdom. The theory is in two forms—the materialistic and the theistic. The materialistic theory holds that matter is eternal, possessed of potential qualities that cause all changes; this is atheistic and antibiblical. [The theistic theory regards the body of man as descending from preexisting animal life, and the soul as inbreathed. While not absolutely opposed to Scripture, this is not a plain interpretation of it.]

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3. The Bible does not inform us precisely when the first man appeared, but most scholars, reckoning from biblical data, place the date about six thousand years ago. If scientists can show a greater age the Christian's faith need not be impaired.

HIS NATURE.

4. Man consists of two distinct principles, body and soul, the one material, the other immaterial. This view of man is found in the original account of his creation (Gen. ii, 7), and is sustained in all subsequent references to him (Dan. vii, 15).

5. We do not know how the body and soul subsist in union. But we do know that the Bible represents the soul as of supreme importance (Matt. xvi, 26), and the body as its servant or instrument in the accomplishment of the mission of the earthly existence (1 Cor. ix, 27).

6. Man was made in the image of God

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Body
Soul *H*
Spirit *F*
revel.
(Gen. i, 26). This can refer only to his spiritual nature, possibly to its moral character, probably to the three-one structure of his immaterial part, a trinity, a being having threefold capacity or relationship comparable to that of Father, Son, and Spirit in the Godhead.

7. The bodies of all men save that of Adam are derived from their parents by a process of generation. It is generally held in the church that the soul is not so derived, but that it is created by the immediate agency of God. This seems to be the teaching of the Scriptures (Heb. xii, 9).

HIS UNITY.

8. The Bible represents the race of man as proceeding from one pair, Adam and Eve, and sketches the history of a family through many centuries (Gen. ii-vi). After the Deluge the Bible represents Noah as the new progenitor whose family spread

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along the Euphrates and whose descendants peopled the earth.

9. This doctrine of unity in Adam and Noah is sustained by the latest investigations in history, language, institutions, religion, and government, all indicating that the existing nations originated on the plains of Asia.

10. The Bible represents race unity as the ideal and ultimate of the divine plan. Scattered for wise purposes (Acts xvii, 26, 27), mankind are to be gathered again as one household in Christ, acknowledging God as Father and each the other as brother (Gen. xlix, 10).

HIS CONDITION.

11. The Bible represents man as righteous and upright in his original state, the two parts of his nature being in harmony and subject to the law of God (Gen. i, 25). In that condition, which was enjoyed by the first pair only, there was direct converse

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with God. How long this state continued is not revealed.

12. While in innocence man received two directions from God designed to exalt him. The first was to "multiply and replenish the earth;" the other was to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing." This indicates a purpose of God to produce a race of holy beings superior to all other earthly creatures (Gen. i, 26-28).

13. The Bible relates the story of a terrible attack upon the holy pair by a subtle spirit (Gen. iii, 1-7), by which they were led into sin. The tradition of that event has gone into all the earth, and of its essential truthfulness all must be convinced. Universal man gives evidence that he has departed from the ideal of his being.

14. But, though fallen, man is under grace by which he may rise into beauty and strength and glory, so that what he lost in

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Adam may be fully regained in Christ (1 Cor. xv, 22). Left to himself, he now sinks into shame and ruin; but, helped by God, he makes progress toward an excellence that cannot be described (1 John iii, 2). So the Bible classifies men under two heads—the children of the world and the children of God.

HIS DESTINY.

15. The Bible, especially the New Testament, represents a man's earthly life as a preparation for another life; not that this is worthless, but that the next is to be determined by this, and that therefore this life should be ordered with reference to that (Rev. xx, 12). The Bible also represents that the life to come will be eternally fixed—the holy being happy in the presence of Jesus, the unholy driven from him into darkness and sorrow (Matt. xxv, 34, 41).

Meditation. "What is man, that thou

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art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor (Psa. viii, 4, 5).

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THIRD LESSON.

Doctrine of God-Man.

DOCTRINE STATED.

1. THIS language is in Article II of our creed: "The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature through the energy of the Holy Ghost and was born of a virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very man."

2. This statement involves the following truths: that Christ is both God and man; that the Godhead and manhood are perfect in him; that the union of the two natures was a miracle, the humanity being a special

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creation, without the ordinary process of generation; that the union was perfect, forming one person, and perpetual, continuing in the world to come; that the divine nature, existing before the human, called the Son of God and the Word of God, was nevertheless of one substance with the Father.

3. The above is opposed to several opinions held at different times by men in various countries who have succeeded in gaining a brief and limited following but who have failed to exert any commanding influence upon the world.

4. Chief among the errors are these: that Christ had no body, but was able at will to present a physical appearance; that he had no human soul, but a body indwelt by the Holy Spirit; that there were two persons, a divine and a human, abiding in one body, the latter submissive to the former, that Christ was a mere man born like other men,

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possessing larger measures of the Spirit; that he was neither God nor man, but some exalted person from the heavenly world; that he was both God and man, but in a modified way.

5. It is not claimed that the orthodox doctrine on this subject can be made plain to human understanding. On the contrary, it is admitted to be full of mystery (1 Tim. iii, 16).

DOCTRINE SUSTAINED.

6. It is important that every believer should be able to defend this doctrine, as it is central to the Christian religion.

7. Among the first arguments in its support is the prominence given to it in the Scriptures. Without it the Bible would be a cold and meaningless system of history and morals.

8. The writers of the Old Testament clearly foresaw the advent of a glorious person, clothed in our nature, without human

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paternity (Gen. iii, 15), of the stock of Abraham (Gen. xlix, 10), of the family of David (Jer. xxiii, 5), who should be called the Son of God (Psa. ii, 7), the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father (Isa. ix, 6), and Immanuel, God with us (Isa. vii, 14).

9. Circumstances attending the earthly career of this person were predicted so that no one could fraudulently represent him (Mic. v, 2). He was to be a teacher and redeemer (Deut. xviii, 15; Isa. lix, 20), also a king with universal and everlasting dominion (Dan. vii, 14), and the blessedness of his reign is portrayed (Isa. xi, 3-9).

10. The writers of the New Testament seek to show that the one so foretold actually appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. His genealogy is sketched (Matt. i, 1-21), and many events are given agreeing with the circumstantial predictions (Matt. ii, 6, 15). He was supernaturally announced (Matt. iii, 17), confessed to be

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divine by the disciples (Matt. xvi, 16), by demons (Matt. viii, 29), and by the Roman centurion (Matt. xxvii, 54). His wisdom, goodness, and power are acknowledged to be superhuman (John vii, 46; iii, 2), and his existence prior to his birth was declared (John i, 1-4).

11. The New Testament writers ascribe divine acts to him (Heb. i, 3-4; Rom. xiv, 10-11), and mention him as teacher (Matt. v, 2), Saviour (Matt. i, 21), and King (Luke i, 32, 33). He was conscious of his divine nature (Luke ii, 49), as his words show (Mark i, 22). He is assigned permanent place among the persons of the trinity (Matt. xxviii, 19).

12. Whoever rejects the foregoing as proof of the divinity of Christ is compelled to believe that the system of Judaism had no purpose, its types and prophecies no significance; that the writers of both covenants were deceived; that Jesus himself was a

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dreamer or an impostor; that the men who followed his fortune even to death believed cunningly devised fables; that the two systems of religion inculcating the highest morality and exerting the most benign influence are fraudulent in that which constitutes their vital principle. It is vastly easier to believe that Jesus was God-man than to believe all that must follow the rejection of that doctrine.

DOCTRINE VALUED.

13. This doctrine helps man to form correct ideas of God. This was one declared purpose of the incarnation (John i, 18). The nature and character of God may be seen in Jesus Christ, correcting the errors into which men have fallen in all countries.

14. The doctrine gives man exalted views of himself, as capable of union with his Maker, Jesus being the first among many brethren to be brought home to glory (Rom. viii, 29).

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15. This doctrine casts light upon many subjects—the existence of the spiritual world, the relation between the spiritual and the material, the aspirations of universal humanity, the possibilities and destinies of man.

Meditation. “He is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell” (Col. i, 17-19).

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FOURTH LESSON.

Doctrine of Atonement.

THE MEANING.

1. THE atonement, as the word implies (at-one-ment), is the provision which God has made for the restoration of sinners to his favor through the sufferings and death of Christ.

2. The atonement has a twofold aspect: first, as related to God, removing the obstacles to his grace; second, as related to men, revealing to them the nature of God and so drawing them to God. This was the view of St. Peter (Acts v, 31).

3. The atonement is not an afterthought—to meet an unexpected emergency and correct consequent evils; but a forethought of God—he foresaw the sinful fall of man

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and predetermined to provide a ransom (1 Pet. i, 19, 20).

THE NECESSITY.

4. Why should any atonement be needed? This question has been raised in every century, generally by those who have imperfect views of God and his government.

5. A sovereign must have some condition upon which he would pardon offenses. An unholy being cannot come into direct communion and favor with a holy being, unless at the pleasure of the latter.

6. The very nature of man requires atonement. Every human being has a personal consciousness of failure to keep the law of his being, producing a sense of unworthiness and ill desert. There is therefore a necessity for some way to restore man to Deity. No man can rest until he knows that pardon is possible upon terms with which he can comply (Matt. xi, 28).

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7. It is probable that the atonement was also needed to impress beings in other worlds, that God might appear just when he justified (Rom. iii, 26), and that his administration might be approved by all of his intelligent creatures.

THE FACT.

8. The doctrine is plainly taught in the Scriptures, by the prophets (Isa. liii, 5), by John the Baptist (John i, 29), by the apostle (Gal. iii, 13) who accounted the cross the chief theme of discourse (Gal. vi, 14), and by Jesus (Matt. xx, 28).

THE THEORY.

9. In attempting a philosophical explanation of the atonement men have reached a great variety of opinion, in defense of which many volumes have been written. These have been the basis of much controversy, some of which has not been tempered by the Christlike spirit.

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10. This variety may be taken as evidence that the theme is too profound to be mastered by the finite mind, and that each man comes to it with his antecedent convictions or needs, treating it with all honesty but failing to do full justice to it.

11. A few of these views may be presented by way of illustration. Origen taught that the devil by stratagem and fraud got the human race under his control and that Christ was offered as a ransom. Socinus believed that the death of Christ was intended to show men how to endure suffering. Horace Bushnell held that the death of Christ had power to move the sinful heart to repentance and love. Grotius claimed that sin is an offense against the government of God, and the death of Christ maintained the dignity of the government. Anselm saw in the sacrifice of Christ an infinite merit which was an offset for the sins of the race. Dr. Shedd maintained that the

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death of Christ met the demands of God's holiness and justice. Dr. Samson contended that the death of Christ was an assumption of past sins and a guarantee of help for all who believe.

12. It is probable that these opinions which seem to conflict are different sides of the great doctrine which might be found by weaving them together.

13. In adopting any theory one mistake should be avoided. It is wrong to represent God as implacable, a stern creditor who needed to be satisfied. We must not think of Christ as an interposing friend kindly averting the divine wrath. The death of Christ was the method chosen by a holy and loving father to accomplish his gracious purpose (John iii, 16). >

14. Without doubt the atonement will be one of the chief themes of study in the coming centuries of the world's history and in the ages beyond the grave. There is a mys-

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tery and fascination in the theme that will engage the best minds, and the solution of its problems must be among the noblest achievements of the human mind.

THE INFLUENCE.

15. Of one thing all well-informed people are aware: wherever the atonement has been most clearly preached and most earnestly believed there has been found the highest type of religion and the greatest prosperity in the church. The heathen have been won by this message as by no other.

Reflections. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. ii, 9).

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FIFTH LESSON.

Doctrine of Justification.

THE TERM.

1. ¹JUSTIFICATION is that act of God's grace wherein he pardons sin and accepts the sinner as righteous in his sight. > It is a free and gracious act; it does not proceed from any necessity or obligation, but from his good will as a sovereign. It remits the penalty due for sin and restores the person to favor.

2. Many have confused the terms justification and regeneration, but they may be easily distinguished. The former is a change in the mind and attitude of God toward man; the latter is a change in the mind and heart of man.

3. The term justification, or its equiva-

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lents and derivatives, is used in many places in the sacred Scriptures, indicating the importance attached to it in the scheme of religion therein unfolded.

THE GROUND.

4. God forgives and accepts the sinner because of the death of Christ (Rom. v, 9). The sinner's only hope and plea for mercy must be in and through the crucified Son of God (Acts iv, 12).

5. This statement must be guarded. They are mistaken who think that God was man's enemy and Christ man's friend, the latter laying down his life to placate the former. Such view is derogatory to God and offensive to man.

6. Scholars are not agreed as to the relation between the death of Christ and justification, except that one is the ground or basis of the other. And that is enough to know.

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THE CONDITION.

7. The one only condition in man for obtaining forgiveness and acceptance with God is faith in Christ (Acts xv, 131).

8. This statement has troubled some. It has been said that faith in itself is not a sufficient reason for pardon, and it has been urged that James makes another condition, that he contradicts Paul (James ii, 24; Rom. iii, 28).

9. The faith and works mentioned by Paul and James represent two sides of one doctrine. Paul wrote to correct the errors of ritualists who thought that certain performances, without regard to the inner life, secured divine favor. James opposed the errors of those who supposed that a theoretic acceptance of Christ was the sole condition of life.

10. Faith is a state of mind and heart; works are the fruitage of faith. The faith or condition on which God justifies leads to

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a new life, as Paul declares. The works are preceded by faith. We are justified by faith, but faith is justified, proved to be genuine, by works.

THE BENEFITS.

The psalmist and the apostle have enumerated the benefits (Psa. xxxii and Rom. vi) that follow justification.

11. The first of these is peace (Rom. v, 1). There is no longer any controversy between God and the justified soul, and the disquietude formerly experienced has passed away.

12. (Sin separates a man from God and deprives him of blessings which a loving Father would bestow.) Chief among these gifts is that of the Holy Ghost, whose presence comforts, renews, and sanctifies. When sin is pardoned and man restored to God access is had to all forfeited privileges. By means of the strength so obtained the justi-

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fied soul is enabled to stand fast in its new life and relation (Rom. v, 2).

13. Whatever good the pardoned sinner may receive, however abundant and precious, it is only a foretaste and guarantee of that which is to follow (1 Cor. ii, 9). The Scriptures abound in promises and representations on this point. Reason would lead one to expect such a result (Rom. viii, 32). And experience shows that the spiritual life is one of constantly increasing blessing, that "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv, 18). Hence the justified man comes into an attitude of expectation or hope.

14. The bright prospect so presented to the justified—the glory of God revealed in promise and anticipated by hope, the rich inheritance that is in store, far surpassing all the treasures of earth—causes the man to rejoice with exceeding great joy, a joy to

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which the unsaved man is an utter stranger. And in the midst of all this the man exclaims, "My God is reconciled, I can no longer fear."

15. The blessings enumerated above as the result of justification enable the man to look with changed vision upon the outward circumstances of this life. What previously was considered to be misfortune is now beheld as the means of discipline, producing patience, experience, hope, and a long train of virtues. He is therefore led to glory in tribulations (Rom. v, 3), as permitted by a wise God for man's good (John xvi, 20), knowing that the sorrows of earth end in the joys of heaven (2 Cor. iv, 17).

Meditation. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v, 1, 2).

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SIXTH LESSON.

Doctrine of Regeneration.

THE TERM.

1. LITERALLY, the word regeneration signifies born again. Man's first birth is carnal. When he experiences a new heart he begins a life so distinct from the other that he is said to be reborn.

2. The term is theological, not biblical. It is employed by scholars to denote a state which is plainly described in Scripture. The word occurs only twice in our English Bible (Matt. xix, 28; Titus iii, 5), but in different senses.

3. The heart state denoted by this term is indicated by several other expressions—"born again," or from above (John iii, 7), "quickened" (Eph. ii, 1), "renewing of the

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mind" (Rom. xii, 2), "putting off the old man and putting on the new man" (Eph. iv, 22-24), having "Christ formed within" (Gal. iv, 19), "begotten" of God (1 Pet. i, 3). It appears therefore that the term is legitimate.

THE STATE.

4. Before regeneration the soul was said to be "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii, 1). Afterward it "passed from death unto life" (1 John iii, 14). This comprehensive expression covers the whole subject. The soul has certain powers or faculties that were intended to act Godward. Paralyzed by sin, they are inactive, and the soul, yielding to the lower nature, indulges in that which is contrary to the law of God. In the new birth these powers are quickened, and, as a consequence, new direction is given to all the activities.

5. These spiritual processes involve the entire nature of man—the intellect, sensi-

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bilities, and will. The new state is therefore one of new thoughts, new hopes, new desires, new plans. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v, 17).

6. This new life is specially marked by these features: delight in the word of God (Psa. i, 2), love for Christ and devotion to his cause (John xiv, 23), love for the brethren (1 John ii, 10), love to God which obtains the ascendancy and prevails over opposing affections (Matt. xxii, 37).

THE CAUSE.

7. Man is not the author of regeneration. No soul can change its own state, or the state of another soul (John i, 12, 13; Eph. ii, 8-10). Good resolutions may be formed at times, but they do not originate in any inherent power or quality, but from external influence.

8. The instrumental cause of regenera-

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tion is the word of God (1 Pet. i, 23). That is "quick and powerful, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv, 12). "The law of God is perfect, converting the soul" (Psa. xix, 7).

9. The efficient cause of regeneration is the Holy Spirit (John iii, 8), who is the source of all energy. By him man was made a living soul (Gen. ii, 7), a soul with spiritual life. By him that life is restored (Rom. viii, 6). Regeneration is therefore a birth of the Spirit.

THE PROCESS.

10. The method by which the Spirit as the agent uses the word as an instrument in changing the heart varies according to temperament, circumstances, and the past life of the individual. Saul, the Philippian jailer, and the Ethiopian eunuch were all born of God, but the demonstrations were not the same in any two cases.

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11. Some persons, after living long in sin, have entered the new life by a remarkable chain of experiences. They have been deeply impressed with their sinfulness and anxious for pardon. Helped by the Spirit, they have accepted the Saviour. Larger measures of the Spirit renewed and strengthened. A spirit of adoption or assurance followed, and the cry of "Abba, Father," breaks from their lips!

12. These phenomenal cases must not be taken as criteria for others. Indeed, they are exceptional, and by no means the better forms. God leads many to himself by gradual and gentle measures.

13. One method of spiritual renewal, described in Scripture, has been obscured in the church through its efforts in behalf of adults. God has large provision for little children. Through the unconditional benefits of the atonement all infants, presenting no opposition to grace, dying at an early

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age, go to heaven. It is also provided that through nurture, training, and instruction the children may be brought up for God (Eph. vi, 4). In all such cases God honors the means employed, and these persons are regenerated at a very early age.

14. There is good reason to believe that child nurture is the primary and normal method by which God intends to save men, and that just in proportion as it is faithfully employed may we expect rapid increase in the household of faith (Psa. lxxviii, 1-8).

15. But whether early or late in life, by gentle and continuous or by occasional and stern influence, the new life is always the result of God's work in the soul, giving it power to will and to do (Phil. ii, 13). It is the duty of all who have the care of souls to see that this work is genuine and thorough, made visible by its fruits. The regenerate heart is necessary for the highest life here and hereafter (John iii, 3).

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The evangelical church is distinguished from the liberal by this doctrine. The latter holds that the new life is an evolution of the soul toward God, while all orthodox Christians claim that it is produced only by the Spirit of God through the truth. The distinction is fundamental and far-reaching.

Reflection. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. i, 23).

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SEVENTH LESSON.

Doctrine of Sanctification.

DEFINITION.

1. THE term sanctification is most frequently employed in Scripture to denote a separation from ordinary to sacred purposes. Certain times, persons, places, and things are so set apart—the Sabbath (Gen. ii, 3), the tabernacle (Num. xviii, 10), the Hebrew people (Exod. xix, 10, 14), the altar (Matt. xxiii, 19). In this sense men may sanctify or consecrate themselves (Lev. xi, 44).

2. The term is also applied to those ceremonial purifications by which, under the Mosaic ritual, the Hebrews were restored to civil and religious privileges and dedicated to God (Num. vi, 11).

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3. The above were evidently designed to prepare for the fuller meaning with which the word is now charged. Whatever and whoever was devoted to God must be without blemish, and the outward cleansings were typical of spiritual and moral purification (1 Pet. i, 15, 16).

4. The word therefore contains the following ideas: the separation of a man to God; the removal from him of everything offensive to God, whether of inward state or of act; the acquisition of those qualities that shall form him anew in the image of God.

5. Sanctification is distinguished from regeneration by several particulars: the latter is the impartation of life, the former the attainment of purity; the latter is an instantaneous and complete work, the former is both instantaneous and progressive; the latter is purely internal, the former both internal and external.

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ATTAINMENT.

6. Sanctification is accomplished by the same agents as are employed in regeneration—the atonement in Christ (Heb. ix, 14), the word (John xvii, 17), the Spirit (1 Pet. i, 2).

7. In order to sanctification there is required in man precisely the same spiritual exercise that is prescribed as a condition of regeneration, namely, faith (Acts xv, 9).

8. Moreover, sanctification and regeneration begin at one and the same time, only, as already stated, the former is complete, there being no possible mid-ground between life and death, and the latter is continued beyond the initial hour. In other words, when a man is justified and regenerated sanctification begins.

9. The process of sanctification, being gradual and continuous, involves more of human effort than regeneration. By prolonged search for the truth, by increasing

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sorrow for sin, by a steady hold to Christ by faith, with attending watchfulness and prayer, resulting in ever-increasing devotion and a more complete yielding of all to God, the Spirit comes in augmenting power, perfecting holiness in us and enabling us to attain holiness in conversation and deed (2 Cor. vi, 17; viii, 1; 1 Tim. iv, 15, 16).

10. There is, however, a point which may be reached in this life when sin shall cease its dominion, when one is consciously delivered from it, a state subsequent to a gradual work, attained instantly. In that sense sanctification may be instantaneous.

PERFECTION.

11. What degree of holiness may be reached by believers in this life? This question has received much attention in all churches, and the discussions upon it have been troublesome because words have been

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employed in different senses by different persons.

12. Some have held that personal holiness is neither required nor expected under the Gospel, that Christ is the end of the law to all who believe, and that the believer attains nothing except to be clad in the righteousness of Christ. Others have gone to the opposite extreme, by distorting certain passages, claiming that men may be absolutely sinless.

13. The great body of the church have agreed substantially upon the following points: that the ultimate deliverance of all believers from sin is proposed in the plan of redemption; that the true followers of Christ hate and loathe sin and ought to struggle against it; that no one can attain absolute perfection; that as long as man lives in this world there inhere in his nature certain elements without which he would be unfitted for this state of exist-

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} ence, but with which he is perpetually liable to sin, and that therefore these instincts must be perpetually restrained, chastened, and disciplined.

14. John Wesley, finding the word perfect in the Scriptures as descriptive of a state of grace in believers (Matt. v, 48), employed all his energies to gain it, and concluded that it was merely the dominance of love to God and man. (He is a perfect Christian, so far as quality goes, when all his actions are controlled by love.) After that, however, there may be a progress not in kind but in degree.

15. Of one thing we may be well assured: this is no time to lower the standard of Christian living. With the general conformity of many to the spirit and practice of the world every soul should seek to know its high calling of God in Christ (Jesus as set forth in Scripture, and to press toward it as the goal of all the noblest ef-

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fort. This is the will of God, even our sanctification. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Prayer. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v, 23).

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EIGHTH LESSON.

Doctrine of Final Things.

THEME.

1. WHAT lies beyond the present order of things? Is this order eternal? What is to be the outcome of human life and history? Does death end all, or shall man live again? These questions, involving the interests of the race, have engaged the best minds in every age.

2. In considering this subject the utterances of the Bible must be final. What is found on its pages, and that only, must answer every question or leave it unanswered. It is worthy of special note that the Scriptures present but little information concerning the future world—the Old Testament less than the New Testament.

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The material is the more to be prized on that account.

DEATH.

3. The earthly existence of every man terminates in one way. The material part fails to perform its functions, is dissolved, and mingled again with the elements (Eccles. xii, 7). There have been but three exceptions to this law of destiny—Enoch, Elijah, and Christ.

4. The immaterial part of man does not perish with his body. Neither does it linger about the place of burial. Separated from its old companion it enters a new state of conscious existence (Phil. i, 23).

5. After death the righteous are happy in fellowship with Christ and each other (Rev. iv, 13), and they are separated from the wicked, who are miserable (Luke xvi, 25, 26). The departed are not allowed intercourse with men in the flesh, and, if such intercourse is had, it is unlawful (Luke

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xvi, 29-31). The spirit world is in two distinct parts (Matt. xxv, 46).

CRISIS.

6. The present course of nature will not continue forever. At a day fixed in the mind of God, but unknown to men, a great and sudden change will be made, known as the end of the world. Then the race of man will be complete, no more human beings will be born, time will end, and a new order will be ushered in (Psa. cii, 25, 26; Isa. li, 6; Luke xxi, 33; 2 Pet. iii, 6-13; Rev. x, 5, 6).

7. This great change will be preceded by the universal spread of the Gospel (Hab. ii, 14; Matt. xxiv, 14), the conversion of the Jews (Rom. xi, 26), the coming of antichrist, and a brief period of loose doctrine when men will scoff at religion (2 Thess. ii, 3), and the general resurrection and judgment.

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8. Little is told concerning the new order. There will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness (Rev. xxi, 1; Isa. lxv, 17; 2 Pet. iii, 13). The mediatorial reign having ceased (1 Cor. xv, 24, 25), and the problem of sin and probation having been solved, God will be all in all. Then shall begin, spreading away in the ages following, that beneficent reign in which the wise purpose of the Infinite mind will more and more appear to the intelligent universe.

EVENTS.

9. Most of the events mentioned above are treated in a few sentences of Scripture, for which reason some have indulged in unprofitable speculation and debate. Let us be content with what is written until we meet the realities.

10. The second coming of our Lord in glory is plainly taught. The church has

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been divided, some thinking he would come to reign a thousand years, and others that he would come at the end of a thousand years of spiritual dominion, by far the greater number inclining to the latter view.

11. The orthodox church holds that the bodies of all men will be raised and reunited with their spirits; but how this is to be done, or precisely what will be the nature of that risen body, it is not believed the Scriptures declare, or that it is important for us to know (Rom. viii, 11; John v, 28). The bodies of the saints shall be like the body of Jesus (Phil. iii, 21).

12. The judgment will be general. The whole human family and the angels that fell will appear at a set time before Christ (Acts xvii, 31). The purpose will not be to decide the destiny of individuals—that was done at death—but to close up the whole question of probation and sin, and make public declaration and permanent

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separation (Matt. xxv, 31, 32). The basis of awards will be the word of Christ (John xii, 48). The importance of such an occasion will appear in its bearings upon the past and the future.

FINALITY.

13. After the judgment the material universe will be reconstructed. Part of it at least will be purified and made glorious (2 Pet. iii, 10-13). This transformation will meet God's purpose to establish two realms, in both of which he will be supreme, one governed by law, the other by love.

14. The permanent abode of the wicked will be fixed in one part of the universe, separated from the righteous. Their sorrows are portrayed in many figurative expressions (Rev. xxi, 8). If any doubt the reality of such a state, let them remember that Jesus declares it (Luke xiii, 28). Without doubt it will be the best that a

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wise and good God can do, consistently with his character and government, for those who reject all his offers of mercy.

15. The home of the righteous is now in preparation (John xiv, 3), doubtless through the working of that mighty power in nature by which Christ, while in the spirit world, subdues all things (Phil. iii, 21; Rom. viii, 21, 22). It will be exceeding beautiful (Rev. xxi, 10-27). The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall reign forever and ever. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

Reflection. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii, 17).

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APPENDIX.

A. REVIEW QUESTIONS.

(To be used in private and in the class.)

I. *Doctrine of God*.—What do the Scriptures affirm concerning the existence of God? How general is the belief in God? What is the origin of atheism? How did God manifest himself to man in innocence? How was the knowledge of God affected by the fall? How does God now make himself known to men? What is God? How many persons are there in the Godhead? What are the attributes of God? How does God exert his power?

II. *Doctrine of Man*.—What is man? What do some philosophers teach concerning the origin of man? When was man created? How many parts are there in man's constitution? How are the bodies

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of men derived? How are their souls derived? From whom did the human race proceed? How may the doctrine of the unity of the race be sustained? What was man's original moral condition? What was God's first command to the first man? How was man led into sin? What is to be the destiny of man?

III. *Doctrine of God-Man.*—What is Article II of the Methodist creed? What counter opinions have been held concerning Christ? How does the Scripture maintain the doctrine of Christ's divinity? What circumstances in the earthly career of Jesus fulfilled prophecies concerning him? How does the New Testament set forth the divinity of Jesus? What follows the rejection of Christ's divinity? How is the doctrine of Christ's divinity related to God, to man, and to the spiritual world?

IV. *Doctrine of Atonement.*—What does the term atonement mean? What are the

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two aspects of atonement? When was the plan of atonement conceived in the divine mind? Why was any atonement needed? How is the doctrine of atonement taught in the Scripture? What theories of the atonement have been offered? What does this variety of opinion indicate? What mistake concerning atonement should be specially noted and avoided? How long will this subject probably be studied?

V. Doctrine of Justification. — Define justification. What is the difference between justification and regeneration? What is the ground of forgiveness and acceptance with God? What is the relation between justification and the death of Christ? What is the condition in man for forgiveness with God? How are faith and works related in justification? What is the first benefit of justification? What gift is bestowed by God in justification? What promises are made to the justified?

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VI. *Doctrine of Regeneration.*—What does the word regeneration mean? What other words in Scripture mean the same thing? Why is regeneration a new life? How much of the soul is affected in regeneration? What four special features characterize the regenerate state? (What is the instrumental cause of regeneration?) What is the efficient cause of regeneration? Give scriptural examples of regenerate men? What are the phenomenal aspects of remarkable regeneration? What is the possible method with little children?

VII. *Doctrine of Sanctification.*—What is the most ordinary sense applied to this word? How was the term applied to Jewish ceremonies? What was the evident intention of such use? What is the full scriptural meaning of the word? How is sanctification distinguished from regeneration? What agents are employed in sanctification? When does sanctification begin? What is

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the process of sanctification? What is Christian perfection? What should be held with much emphasis by the church of our time?

VIII. *Doctrine of Final Things.*—What great questions interest all men? How much has the Bible to offer concerning these things? How does every human life terminate? What becomes of man's body? What becomes of man's soul after death? What is the state of the righteous immediately after death? What changes will occur in this material world? What is the resurrection? What is the judgment? What will be the destiny of the wicked? What will be the destiny of the righteous?

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B. PRIVATE MEDITATION.

(Daily with prayer let the following themes be held in the thought after reading the lesson.)

FIRST WEEK.

1. God has lived always and will live forever.
2. By his wisdom and power he created all things and now upholds and governs all things.
3. God is a Spirit, immortal, invisible, and omnipresent.

SECOND WEEK.

1. I am a creature of God made in his image.
2. I am a soul inhabiting for a time a body, allied to God by the first and to the material world by the other.
3. I am one in a race of sinful men, descended from Adam, the first man.

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THIRD WEEK.

1. Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God and the Son of man.

2. In Jesus I see the glory of the eternal Father and the highest exhibition of human nature.

3. Jesus is the central theme of the whole Bible.

FOURTH WEEK.

1. Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, therefore for me.

2. The necessity for this death is partly concealed in infinite wisdom and partly apparent to man's best judgment.

3. The reason for the atonement, not now fully known, will be revealed in coming ages.

FIFTH WEEK.

1. It is a marvelous truth that a sinner may be forgiven and restored to the favor of God.



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2. Forgiveness on God's side is through the death of Christ.

3. Forgiveness is pronounced only on condition of man's faith in Christ.

SIXTH WEEK.

1. The Spirit of God works in the soul of man, imparting a new life.

2. This change sometimes occurs late in life and is marked by a crisis with emotion.

3. Sometimes the change is effected in childhood by the influence of nurture and training and teaching, only by the power of the Spirit.

SEVENTH WEEK.

1. A total separation from sin and a total surrender to God is the ideal life.

2. This state is attained after regeneration by the influence of the truth and Spirit.

3. Every believer should earnestly and constantly desire this exalted state. >

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EIGHTH WEEK.

1. Death does not end all. There is a life beyond the grave.

2. The condition into which one passes at death depends upon the response made in time to the gracious influence of God's Spirit and truth.

3. There is a state of woe for the wicked and one of blessedness for the righteous beyond the grave.

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C. READING COURSE.

(Recommended to those who have leisure and disposition to consider the subject of Biblical Doctrine under the guidance of other minds and by other methods.)

1. STUDIES IN THEISM. By Professor Borden P. Bowne. New York: Methodist Book Concern. Price, 90 cents.

2. BIBLE DOCTRINE OF MAN. By Rev. John Laidlaw, A.M. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Price, \$3.

3. GOD-MAN. By L. T. Townsend, D.D. Boston: Lee & Shepard. Price, \$1.25.

4. ATONEMENT IN CHRIST. By John Miley, D.D. New York: Methodist Book Concern. Price, \$1.20.

5. THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION. By James Buchanan, D.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Price, \$4.

6. THE NEW BIRTH. By J. W. Bashford, D.D. New York: Methodist Book Concern. Price, 25 cents.

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7. CHRISTIAN PURITY. By Bishop R. S. Foster. New York: Methodist Book Concern. Price, \$1.35.

8. SANCTIFICATION. By Bishop S. M. Merrill. New York: Methodist Book Concern. Price, 25 cents.

9. ESCHATOLOGY; or, The Doctrine of the Last Things. By F. G. Hibbard, D.D. New York: Methodist Book Concern. Price, \$1.20.

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